

Sex Messiah: A Tantric Odyssey.

*A former monk travels to a
tantric cult deep in the jungles
of Central India and becomes a
“Sex Messiah.”*

**The virginal monk has sex (for the
first time!), is asked to become the
successor (master) of the ashram,
and then realizes he’s just joined a
cult... full of sexual abuse and
dysfunction**



My girlfriend, Psalm, and I were sleeping on a concrete slab of floor, the coolest surface we could find in the humid jungle heat of Central India.

A small woman entered the room and tugged Psalm's foot. Peeling herself off of the floor, Psalm stumbled into the hallway. Held in a state between waking and sleep I overheard their conversation.

My husband and I are involved in a fourteen-day ritual, which is necessary for keeping cosmic balance in the universe.

Yes, how may I help you? Psalm said.

Well, the ritual consists of a specific ceremonial practice. For fourteen days, we need the assistance of another couple. The couple we have been using for the past twelve days are no longer eligible to assist us, since the woman has started to menstruate.

How is this ceremony done?

My husband and I worship the sexual intercourse of another couple.

At this point I started freaking out. Some guys might love the idea of having people "worship" their sexual endeavors but the thought of having an audience made me queasy. Even now it's

hard to believe that this really happened. The Indian woman went on to explain the exact details of this ritual.

The male and female are placed naked in the center of the temple wherein they engage in intercourse. The man is to insert his lingam into the woman's yoni 108 times. Before each insertion we pour melted butter on the man's lingam as an offering to the gods. Can you and your husband be the object of worship for this ceremony?

He's not my husband. He's my friend.

Can we use you and your "friend" for this ceremony?

So we would be the ones engaged in intercourse while you and your husband poured melted butter on my friend's penis?

Yes, it is considered quite an honor to be the human forms that we use to worship the gods. My husband and I really need your help. If we don't perform this ceremony tonight the entire universe might be placed into a state of unbalance due to engaging in an incomplete ritual.

As I listened to this conversation I kept hoping that my girlfriend would just say no. This was mainly due to the fact that up until that moment I had never actually put my penis into a vagina. I'd licked one and had my penis orally stimulated but I had yet to discover the joys of intercourse, and I instinctively felt that ritualized butter-saturated sex would be a traumatic introduction to vaginal penetration. The context of this anecdote requires a complex and very difficult explanation.

I was raised in an orthodox Hindu ashram in California. An ashram is a center for learning and often plays the role of monastery for many Hindu communities. My parents owned this ashram, which is all the more unique since they are not of South Asian descent.

My father, Patrick Francis Bishop, was born to an American Army intelligence officer and a nineteen-year-old Japanese girl in Tokyo, in the aftermath of the Korean War. (I have my mother's maiden name, I can only guess it is due to the counter-cultural nature of my parents).

When my grandfather abandoned the family, my Japanese grandmother placed my father up for adoption. At three and a half, my dad found himself in the care of a U.S. military family with an abusive and alcoholic father.

My dad's adoptive family, hopped from one military base to another, finally settling in Oahu, Hawaii. During the counter-cultural movement of the late 1960s my dad ran away from his adoptive home. His progress as a homeless teenager to ordained Hindu monk was made quickly via an introduction to Eastern meditative methods that were popular with hippies.

He went from drug-addled dealer of psychedelic drugs to religious convert, living in South and Southeast Asia by means of his monastic begging bowl. This was not all that uncommon in the

era of Timothy Leary and Ram Dass (formerly Richard Alpert of Harvard University). My dad remained a monk until the early 70s.

Obviously, since I exist, he broke his vows, got married and had sex. American converts to Eastern monasticism rarely stay celibate for more than a year. My dad had made it through four.

Dad married the daughter of a Jewish doctor practicing internal medicine in an underprivileged area of Hawaii and a Japanese woman proficient in Italian culinary arts and French Impressionism.

In a series of strange events, (involving Jack Lemmon and Billy Wilder) my father got into acting and soon became a soap star on General Hospital and pursued a successful career in television. This is such a bizarre story, but true nonetheless. He played Dr. Yank Chung from 1985-1987. His love interest on the show was Tia Carrere (Jade Soong Chung, R.N.). He was the first Asian actor, who wasn't a martial artist, to attain romantic leading man status in the U.S. During this time he also became a prominent figure in an exceedingly orthodox sect of American Hindus in California, which led to my parents owning and operating their own ashram.

In some weird way this is an extremely common Hollywood story (think Kabbalah or Scientology). I became unique among my siblings—there are seven of us—by undertaking the vows of a celibate monk. I rapidly gained a reputation in the Hindu community for an inherent knack for the memorization and exegesis of sacred texts. My dedication to sexual repression only enhanced the image I had been cultivating of yogic purity.

Soon, I was an overachieving yogi and meditator trying to climb the spiritual ladder to perfect enlightenment. All the while completely terrified that someone would find out that I wasn't as holy as I appeared.

The beginning of the end of my career as a celibate monk came when I was 21. In June 2003 my father was hospitalized with an aortal dissection (where the main valve of the heart literally separates from the heart muscle) and died eighteen days later.

This was already traumatic for my family, but belonging to a fundamentalist religious community worsened the situation. The community gurus told us that we would be perpetuating a materialistic vision of life if we grieved the loss of our father. According to the gurus, the goal of life was to break the wheel of samsara and attain moksha.

My younger siblings were ordered to dry their tears and be happy for our father, since he was now free from earthly suffering. Because we were a loving family the gurus worried that we had too deep of an emotional bond, which was detrimental to the cultivation of spiritual detachment. My sister was sent to a Hindu nunnery in Southeast Asia and my little brother was sent to Hawaii. By separating us they hoped to break us of our unhealthy familial attachment.

I financially supported my younger siblings by sending monthly checks from the money I made teaching yoga and meditation, and I rededicated myself to monastic life. Soon, I began to fill the role of my father in the Hindu community in Los Angeles by teaching weekly classes on yoga

scriptures and meditation. Four years after Dad died, the head guru of the California community proclaimed me fully enlightened.

I was twenty-five. I had achieved the goal, the attainment I had yearned for since I was kid—and it was empty.

In that moment I saw the game, and felt lonely and alone. I realized I'd only been playing a role. The guru was just maintaining the political hierarchy. She had no insight into my heart and she didn't know my grief. The reputation I gained as a Hindu monk teaching meditation in Southern California and the importance of my family in the history of American yoga made it a really savvy move to promote me up the spiritual ladder. The guru would enhance her legacy through me.

The day after achieving enlightenment, I went out and found a girlfriend. It's probably the best thing I ever did. I was now a disillusioned monk who felt ecstatic just to hold a girl's hand. I could have wound up with any woman; this one happened to be a tantric goddess.

This was Psalm. She was married. She eventually left her husband (who is a decent and kind man) to be with me. My abrupt "blooping" (the term my former Hindu community uses for those who leave) and my alleged affair with a married woman was fodder for not only the gossipers but also for the religious leaders.

These religious leaders were intent upon controlling potential fallout in the community after a respected member had denounced its core values. My denouncement was less dramatic than one might hope, I simply began to openly question the meaning and even the existence of spiritual enlightenment. The entire religious faction was held together by a shared belief in the supernatural-enlightened consciousness of the gurus who led the community.

Once I saw through the charade via my own supposed enlightenment, I voiced my doubts publicly. If I hadn't discredited myself by beginning a relationship with a married woman I might have been heard.

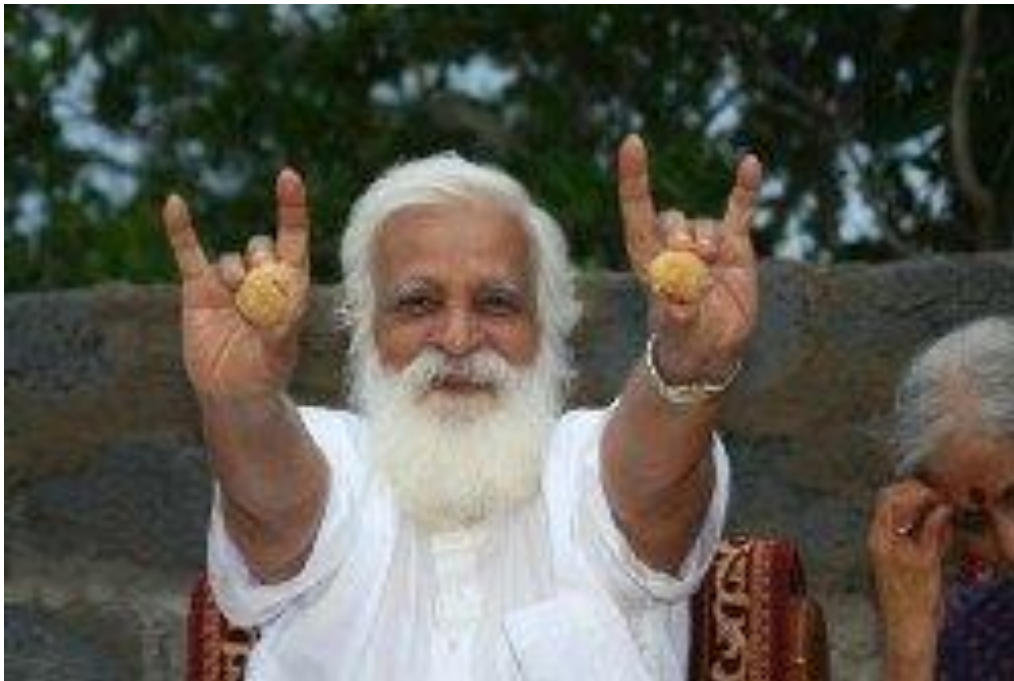
The gurus were concerned that I might still have some influence. They issued a statement declaring me to be not only a fallen monk but also a dangerous threat to Hindu faith. My entire family cut me from their lives and all my friends and former students openly rejected me as a poisonous and possibly evil human being. (The name for this is *aparadha*, which essentially means “against God.” It is the Hindu version of *anathema* (in the Catholic faith), and is used to brand someone as a heretic.)



I felt like an outsider. I felt like a counter-cultural weirdo not only in the world of college degrees, corporate jobs, mortgages, and traditional American family life but now, also, in the world of orthodox Hinduism.

So when my girlfriend, Psalm, told me about this ashram in the jungles of central India that practiced complete acceptance of the human being, regardless of lifestyle, I jumped on the opportunity. Psalm was a yoga teacher and had lived at this ashram, Devipuram, the year before.

In late June 2007, we flew to Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India, to Devipuram. In retrospect I had no idea what I was in for... group sex, girl-on-girl action, and a host of other debaucheries.



Part Two: Sex Messiah: The Virginal Monk.

Guruji Amritananda (sex messiah)

Tantric orgies, a temple deep in the jungles of Central India, butter-saturated sex, and a virginal monk falling (hard) from enlightenment.

After 27 hours of air travel, layovers in Taipei and Kuala Lumpur, and a few near-death experiences on the road driving out of Vizag city I made it to Devipuram. Once you've exceeded 24 hours of air travel and landed in a new time zone you feel as if the air has suddenly turned to liquid and you are now walking under water. So when I met the portly white bearded leader of the temple—Guruji as he was affectionately called—his striking resemblance to Saint Nick was no more strange than the thickness of the air.

The ashram was at the center of a large jungle valley with prehistoric looking mountains and hills on all sides. This isolation was helpful—Devipuram was a kind of Disneyland theme park for sexual perverts with a polytheistic religious bent.



The main feature was a seven-tiered monument to goddess worship with hundreds of life size, ornately painted and carved, statues of divine women. What was most peculiar about these statues was the exquisite detail and vibrancy of the colors used to accentuate and describe their exposed genitalia.

All of the goddesses were placed in positions that openly displayed their sacred vaginas, which were angled toward the open mouths of gaudy dolphins and alligators emerging from the floor to worship the birth canals.

In my jet-lagged state everything seemed like a terrible dream. Vaginas were staring at me from every corner. As a former monk, I felt like closing my eyes and praying to Vishnu out of fear of the female sex organ. Each new pornographic religious idol only loosened my grasp on reality.

Luckily, I had some context since I was fluent in Hindu religious beliefs. Hindus hold the power to reproduce as holy and have made the genital organs into symbols of the creative power in human beings. Still, it was overwhelming to be plunged into a world where giant cocks and pussies were the only things being honored. Usually Hindu images are never graphic and only barely representative of actual genitalia—and definitely aren't the centerpiece of all worship.

Psalm then took me up to the “secret temple,” a padlocked room located on a hill overlooking the seven-tiered palace full of naked female idols. The entire cement floor had been shaped into the lips of a vagina. In the center was a very large clitoris that shot water into the actual cave of the sacred pussy; devout goddess worshippers would fill gallon jugs with this holy liquid. Obviously, at this point, I began to realize that I was in trouble—my expectations before coming to the ashram did not include giant squirting vaginas.

This was a secret temple because most of the “forbidden” or occult practices took place here away from where visitors might stumble on people engaging in butter-saturated sex. My girlfriend had access to this padlocked shrine because she had, the year before, engaged in those forbidden practices in that very temple.

Above this was a Shiva Linga temple. In the back, behind a low wall, was a massive five-foot tall lifelike representation of a thickly muscled cock. It had a foreskin, veins, and was by far the most strikingly pornographic of all the religious iconography.

By the time I had finally laid down for a nap on my first day at the ashram in the guest quarters, my girlfriend curled up next to me on the floor, I simply wanted to sleep. When the small Indian woman disturbed us and proceeded to hard-sell Psalm on forcing me to relinquish my virginity

via ritualistic sex involving a dairy product it didn't seem strange, just like a lot of work and not that much fun.

Believe it or not, this was the beginning of trouble in my relationship. My unwillingness to have my penis lathered in butter by strangers while having sex for the first time in my life was seen as being sexually hung up and unadventurous. I was not only a little gun shy, but unsure of where I drew moral lines. I was just beginning to define myself as separate from two decades of monastic training. But things only worsened from there.



A little context on the history of tantric practice seems prudent at this juncture, before I tell you all about sex that involves food products, girl-on-girl action, and the loss of my virginity. Tantric cults have existed for centuries in India and have always been fringe movements that practiced their arcane arts in secret. Ritualized intercourse and orgies are prominent fixtures within the existing literature on Tantra. Texts like the Kula-Arnava-Tantra describe the types of occult orgies and ritual praxis prescribed and enacted by tantric cults for centuries.

First, a large group of 10 to 50 people select a girl to have coitus with a senior member of the tantric hierarchy. They all go to a secluded place and form a circle around the girl and the senior tantric yogin. Wine, marijuana, and meat are fed to the girl as the tantric yogi begins to stimulate her clitoris, and the group sits and watches.

Once coitus begins the acolytes start to sway and chant in ecstasy. When both the girl and the yogin climax the sexual fluids (semen and vaginal discharge) are then smeared on the foreheads

of both participants as a kind of anointing to seal the divine consummation. When this occurs the encircling group howls and drinks and eats. Then comes the mass orgy.

From this ritual other sexual ceremonial practices evolved. Special focus was placed on the worship and pleasuring of both the male and female genitals. These pujas (ceremonies) usually entailed complex chanting of mantras while stimulating and massaging specific areas of the either the penis or the vagina, culminating with the anointing of sexual fluid on the forehead.

These practices have formed a subculture of tantric practice in India and are something that is done in secret for fear of censure and judgment by conventional Hinduism. Those who are attracted to this tradition are usually enacting some form of rebellion against the caste system (snubbing the divine rights of the priestly and warrior castes) or the puritanical nature of most yogic systems. Westerners who adopt occult tantric practice also seem to be impelled by similar motivations, myself included.



This was the ritual (maithuna) that the small Indian woman wanted my girlfriend and me to participate in. Listening to their conversation, I knew that if Psalm agreed I would be the centerpiece for an orgy my very first night at the ashram, the place where I had sought spiritual asylum.

All my girlfriend had to do was look from the hallway, where she was talking to the small woman, to where I was laying on the floor to see the absolute fear in my eyes. After the woman left disappointed, Psalm lay down next to me.

Why did you look at me that way? She said.

I just felt like that would be a lot for me to take on my first night here.

So you don't think it's morally wrong or anything?

Morally wrong? I don't even know what that means anymore.

A three-day festival in honor of the guru took place the day after I arrived. Hours of smoke filled chanting as Brahmins fed bonfires clarified butter and devout groupies bowed before Guruji (the ashram's Saint Nick lookalike) as they wrapped their hands into the shapes of penises and vaginas.

This practice of forming the hands into the shape of genital organs is understood to be a form of sacred geometry. By contorting the fingers into these sacred shapes (mudras) it invokes the divine energy of the latent creative powers within you and can bring about total spiritual awakening. This basically means that kids who play the four-handed-look-at-the-vagina game in the schoolyards of the American Midwest are in fact invoking powerful divine energies from the universe.

During the festival I could barely find Psalm almost the entire time. There was this little Indian village girl who had a big crush on my girlfriend. They kept disappearing together for hours at a time. When I got tired of trying to figure out where she was I started to socialize. I got to know everyone pretty well and would spend time in the eating area chatting with Western spiritual tourists caught up in the exotic mystique of Eastern eroticism.

They all really liked melted butter. The ritual of melted butter poured over the penis before each insertion into the vagina was quite popular. (Another popular ritual was to rub yogurt all over someone's titties while chanting mantras, and was seen as a high form of worship to the Goddess. They believed that this ritual invoked the sacred Goddess and could bring about divine communion with the universe).

A new friend of mine went everyday to have a young Indian couple perform rituals on her (the same small Indian woman and her husband). The husband would lay my friend on her back in a mud hut behind his house and lather his hands in ghee (melted butter), his hands were dirty and had long yellow fingernails. He inserted his fingers 108 times while reciting ancient mantras. My friend told me this was incredibly spiritual, that she felt God very strongly inside of her 108 times.

Finally the last night of the festival I caught up with Psalm.

What have you been doing with that girl? She seems to know you.

When I was here last year I met her and Guruji asked me to give her lessons in the pujas.

Which pujas?

You know...

No, I don't know.

Yoni puja.

Cunnilingus!

It sounds different when you say it like that.

So is that what you've been doing with her this whole time?

She looked at me and said that I seemed stressed out and that there was nothing for me to worry about. She then massaged my shoulders, which soon became an epic make-out session. This ended all conversation, partly because of my intense hunger for affection. After being a monk deprived of human touch it was nice to have someone kiss and hold me. Affection, for someone so starved like me, was utterly overwhelming. Besides, after recently losing my family I wasn't ready to lose her as well.

The sex was weird. She insisted on dry humping until she climaxed so that she could pretend that we weren't having sex. The levels of denial and sexual dysfunction masquerading alternately as naiveté and spirituality were immense.

It's similar to how Christian teenagers, trying to adhere to chastity before marriage, have oral sex as a kind of divine loophole, but only end up deluding themselves. But obviously this was much more twisted and involved greater levels of denial and psychological gymnastics. Regardless, she wanted to believe that we had a sex-free relationship, that way she could feel okay about fucking other people. Somehow, in her own convoluted way, she didn't want to "cheat" on me.



So she constructed a story about us. We were fellow yogis who shared the path, lived together, did everything a couple would do but never had normal sex. If we engaged in sexual activity it was purely for the attainment of spiritual enlightenment. Therefore, she could have sex with other people and not betray the sacredness of what we had (“pants sex” was a kind of compromise).

It saved her from guilt. Afterward she asked if I would be okay with her engaging in a ritual with 107 other women in the vagina temple on the hill.

What ritual would this be? I asked.

You know, yoni puja.

Why?

I feel incredibly frustrated and held back. I can’t do what I want to do! She said.

You feel held back from having oral sex with 107 women in the vagina temple?

Yes. I feel like I can’t do what I want because you’re here. Last year, when I was here, I could do anything I wanted. Besides it’s a sacred ritual and a once in a lifetime opportunity. And it’s the yoni temple not the ‘vagina’ temple.

Okay, so you feel held back from being able to engage in the sacred ritual/butter covered orgy.

Why can’t you understand this? She said.

Why do you want to do this?

I can’t believe you’re asking me this! Do you want a conventional relationship so bad? Can’t we have a spiritual relationship? Are you such a yogi-puritan that you can’t let me have this?

A spiritual relationship means putting me at risk for STDs?

You’ve turned out so different from what I thought. I thought you were enlightened! She said with absolute sincerity.

The next day we engaged in my first foray into coitus aka intercourse aka “this is the most awesome thing ever!” But our full blown sex was weird really really weird...

Part 3: Sex Messiah: Breaking the Master.



The virginal monk has weird sex (for the first time!), is asked to become the successor (master) of the ashram, and then realizes he's just joined a cult... full of sexual abuse and dysfunction.

After over two months of non-stop physical contact, actual coitus was bound to take place at some point. It was under the pretext of my girlfriend being able to practice her yogic Kegels while having an object with which to squeeze via pulsating repetitions. According to her, and myself, this was not motivated out of a desire for sex but simply to practice certain mid-level tantric yoga drills for subtle genital muscle control.

Did you just feel that? I was just squeezing.

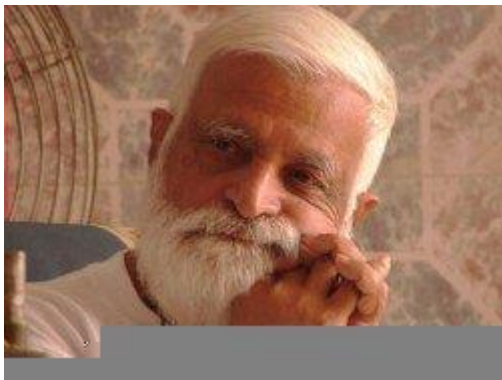
Yeah, you're suctioning me.

Okay, now just you know sort of move in and out... not for pleasure but so I can practice squeezing you while you move. This is helping me in the development of the muscles necessary to raise my kundalini shakti in order to attain enlightenment.

My girlfriend was not wholly to blame for this mechanical and spiritual version of “I’ll just dip the tip in.” I was incapable of engaging in coitus unless under the pretense of spiritual practice, after a life spent in denial of my sexual urges. My spiritual identity had been completely formed around my sexual purity as a monk. Genuine straightforward sex would have forced me to confront the death of my former self. I was not ready to do this. This suited Psalm who was experiencing guilt for leaving her husband and early childhood sexual trauma.

After getting my lingam sticky for the first time an even greater drama began to unfold. An onslaught of emails from my family and former students started to pour into my inbox. These emails varied from threatening to concerned. For the most part my former students and family members were just hugely disappointed in my choice to leave the religious community. The biggest emotional hit was the stripping of my titles.

Being stripped of your religious titles is like losing your right to call yourself a PhD after spending eight years in grad school, writing and successfully defending your dissertation and then teaching at the university level for a dozen years, all because of writing a controversial mid-career paper. It was losing my spiritual titles and credits that drove me to seek ultimate solace from Guruji.



Guruji Amritananda

I found him giving a lecture in the seven-tiered temple filled with yoni statues. I walked right up to him and began crying. He petted my head and soothed me as if I were a hurt child.

What is wrong? My son what is wrong?

I’ve gotten emails from family and former students notifying me that I have been officially stripped of my honorifics and accreditation.

Then I will give them back to you. I confer all titles you once had back to you.

Thank you.

You and I will both go to hell together... people are always there to beat you with the stick of judgment. The world likes to beat people with the stick of judgment. There's no need for you to beat yourself with one as well.

I laughed and felt like I had a father again. This friendship became very tender over the next couple weeks. I found myself opening up and coming to love this fat white-bearded man named Guruji

One day, Guruji told me he was getting old and that he wanted to retire but that there was no one to take on his work. He asked me if I would stay and live with him at Devipuram. He said—then you can become the master.

This astonished me. Stripped of my titles and position, I was unable to continue as a teacher in my former Hindu community, yet here was Guruji inviting me to succeed him. Even though I had rejected the idea of enlightenment I still clung to the idea of being a spiritual teacher—it was the only thing I knew how to do. Besides, back in California, I'd worked so hard to get the title of swami that I wasn't ready to give it up just yet. Accepting Guruji's offer is how I became a sexual messiah.

Guruji believed that the West was suffering spiritually due to having an unhealthy relationship with sexuality. He believed the rituals he taught healed these dysfunctions. Guruji pointed to how much I had healed under his guidance. According to him, I no longer judged and beat myself with guilt. I accepted myself as a human being who was both flawed and divine.

I admitted that I had experienced healing at his ashram.

Guruji then told me that I could help save the West. I could become a messiah who brings his message to the rest of the world. He hoped I could heal many thousands of people through lingam and yoni puja (fellatio and cunnilingus respectively) and therefore make the world a better place. I then asked him how the transactions for these rituals should be conducted.

Of course, you'll do this for money, he said, otherwise it will cheapen the sacredness of the ritual. People must pay so they value the service and don't feel any emotional obligation to you.



Yoni Mudra

Guruji then ran a few days of workshops. A handful of other Westerners and I were initiated into the techniques of invoking divine energies within human body parts normally associated with shame. At first we touched these shameful areas of our own bodies as we chanted mantras and visualized spiritual lines of energy.

This was actually healing for me after having, metaphorically, tied my dick into a knot for over two decades as a monk. Then my girlfriend taught me how to perform the rituals of worshipping and pleasuring the genitals via oral stimulation. I soon mastered these techniques on her divine yoni.

I know this sounds strange but Guruji, at the time, had become a kind of surrogate father for me and provided a much-needed sense of home after my family had rejected me—and considered me a sexual deviant—for leaving my life as a monk and for striking up an affair with a married woman.

Guruji shared his own experiences of being rejected by the Hindu community and his attempt at being an authentic human being.

All of this somehow made sense to me at the time. I was a lost boy and a sex cult was the only place where I felt wanted and accepted, even if it required that I become a purveyor of holy cunnilingus.

Then came the moment that turned everything upside down for me. Guruji asked if I would like to give lessons to the girls who cleaned the temple.

Yes, Guruji, I'd love to help them. Would you like me to teach them English?

I'd like you and your girlfriend to teach them pujas.

Why?

The girls must serve some purpose here. They can provide a much-needed service to the visiting Westerners.

My conversation with Psalm, from a few weeks earlier, came flooding back and I finally allowed myself to confront what I already knew but had been avoiding. She was engaging in oral sex with that girl from the village who cleaned the temple. The realization was too much for me (or at least the admittance of the truth). Everything was crumbling all over again.



View of Devipuram from the hills

In panic, I climbed a hill that overlooked a large valley filled with steaming jungle. I sat on a rock and meditated for hours. This was not my country. This was not my language or my culture. In the end, I was an American whose parents adopted Eastern beliefs in the counter-cultural movement of the 1960s and I was not really a Hindu.

I had one more night at the ashram before I was to fly back to California. I began to reflect on my time there. Guruji had a habit of saying very nasty morally questionable things in such an incredibly sweet way you almost missed the comment. He made it all sound so normal and spiritual and kind.

It really was a mind fuck—the whole group had a talent for making you question moral and social boundaries. These discourses on what was right and wrong (and not judging people)

seemed loving until you realized it meant sexually enslaving teens and selling them to European and American predators.

Guruji had a penchant for saying “man” in a really groovy way that made all the pretty Western girls giggle and swoon with devotion. He interpreted the symbol AUM as a literal representation of a vagina connected to a pair of breasts and a penis. He even meditated while watching hardcore pornography. How could I not have seen that this was the dark side of moral relativism? How had I fallen for outright perversion? How desperate had I become?

The next morning I packed and went to find Guruji. He was making an MP3 recording for a meditation practice. I came in right when he was saying, “If you practice oral sex let the man ejaculate and then smear the seminal fluid on the third eye of both partners.” This was the wisdom he had to share.

Still, I let him hug me goodbye and reinforce his offer to have me come back and be the “master.” I had no moment of boldness. I did not make a demonstration of righteous indignation. I was still too emotionally fragile to put up a fight for anything.

The truth about Guruji broke my heart. To stand up to him meant that I’d have to finally confront the truth about my real dad. The father who raised me in a fundamentalist religion and made me feel that the only shot I had at happiness was to reject life itself as a monk. Being a monk meant giving up on sex, relationships, human love, and any potential for intimacy. But my dad had died and I wasn’t ready to grieve him let alone confront the reality of who and what he was.

I wasn’t ready to become an adult.

All of my gods were dead. I had no moral righteousness to rely upon. At my core I just couldn’t hurt those girls or anybody else. And so I left without saying anything. I never became the sexual messiah that Guruji wanted me to be just as I never became the guru my Hindu community wanted me to be. I was just a really messed up and confused former monk and now failed sexual messiah trying to find his way.

On the plane flight back to America, Psalm and I broke up. Sadly, here too, I was not the strong one. She broke up with me, because she knew deep down that we were different. I was monogamous at my core, while she was prone to polyamory. We got back together a dozen times before I finally cut it off for good and realized that I would have to construct a guiding philosophy that was entirely my own.

She continues to work as a sexual messiah. She runs international workshops and teaches sex workers in India the arcane practices of tantric yoga—providing a spiritual context for their prostitution and thereby empowering these underprivileged Indian streetwalkers to be sexual messiahs themselves. She deeply believes that the greatest healing is found in oral sex, if performed with intention and mantra.

Guruji still lives at his ashram in Central India training future messiahs in the healing potential of genital discharges and ritualized sex with dairy products as lubricant. I know of at least half a dozen sexual messiahs (trained by Guruji) practicing in Europe and America.

Shyam traveling through India

The term “sexual messiah” is my own and reveals more about me than anything else. It is now a cliché to say that humor is often born from deep pain. My own psychological defenses are quite obvious in this narrative. Humor and sarcasm are often a way of avoiding pain, but they can also be ways of transfiguring it.

The Freudian implications of my early celibacy have a lot to do with my dad. I didn’t want to compete with him or be in conflict with him, so I strangled my own sexuality. I’ve made light of a lot of serious stuff, both to avoid the pain of talking about it earnestly and to transfigure it. It may all be a foolish attempt to delude myself that I now have power over it through storytelling. But the truth is if I can’t laugh at myself and my own delusions I might not be able to have sex ever again.

The burden of my past would cripple my penis.

And I really want to have sex, a lot of sex.

I missed out on human warmth and affection for too long as a monk. But in leaving monastic life I went in the opposite direction. Weirdly, it was Guruji who helped me find a middle ground between two extremes.

There is a reason why sex addicts are also capable of completely denying their emotional needs, much like celibate monks deny their own humanity. Guruji’s bad example gave me a reference point—as I left celibacy—by demonstrating to me the delusional trap of trying to rationalize sexual dysfunction through pseudo-spirituality and messianic pretensions.

It was an abrupt and radical awakening to my own fragmented and deformed sexuality. It would have been all too easy to continue rationalizing my own dysfunction through dishonest sex via tantra. Whether it was monasticism or tantric sex, both were disingenuous and ways for me to avoid having to confront uncomfortable truths about my own psyche. I could still disconnect from myself while engaging in ritualistic sex just as I had detached from my emotions and sexual urges in my life as a monk.

Seeing how completely fucked up Guruji was, I knew I did not want to be like him. More importantly, I didn’t want to continue lying to myself.

For the first time in my life, once I recovered from Guruji’s ashram, I just wanted to be human.